

VALUES OF HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

by

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This skit tied for first place in the State-wide skit-writing contest, a feature of the observance of National Home Demonstration Week, West Virginia, 1950. Skits from 27 counties entered in the State Contest.

SOFT MUSIC -- "Memories."

(Seated on stage, by small table, farm women's club member and her teen-age daughter. Music stops when speaking begins.)

MOTHER -- "I just don't see what in the world I can write about in a skit on the 'Values of Home Demonstration Work.' Ever since our club president asked me to work up something on the order of a skit for a public program, I've been in a 'stew.' I do declare, I'll just have to tell her that I don't know of anything to say that would interest the public. In fact, I don't even know that the club has done much here."

DAUGHTER -- "Mother, you mean to tell me that you've been going to club meetings for the last 16 years, and you can't even see any good that the club has done or is doing? Jeepers! If you've wasted one afternoon a month in all that time -- besides the trouble and expense of getting to the meetings -- you'd better stay at home and make us more chocolate cakes."

MOTHER -- "I don't mean that the club hasn't done anything at all, but it's just difficult to put your fingers on it."

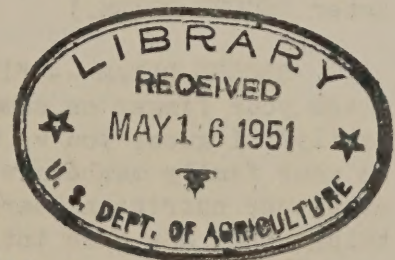
(From outside--noise, "Yoo-hoo-hey-whistle." Daughter jumps up and grabs coat.)

DAUGHTER -- "That's for me, mother ... 4-H meeting up at Bill's tonight. So-long."

MOTHER (while daughter gets coat on)--"Can't you kids ever learn not to be so noisy? Do quiet down before you get to Bill's, and act like human beings."

(Daughter goes out. Mother turns on radio; off-stage soft music, and if possible have someone sing:)

"Memories, memories,
How dear you are to me;
O'er the Sea of Memory
Events become so clear.
Happy scenes,
Joyous scenes
Among club members dear,
O'er the scenes of memories
Club work becomes so clear."



(Mother sits in chair, trying to write something, and finally falls asleep. Soft music of "Memories" continues.)

(Enter FIRST DREAM.)

FIRST DREAM -- "I'm one of your Memories, and I bring before you some of the things that club work has done for you personally. Surely you've not forgotten that 14 years ago you were so timid you could scarcely get up to read a verse of scripture before a club meeting, and that making a talk before a public meeting was clear out of the question. I might remind you that now, if you have anything to say, you can get up and say it without whimpering and having a heart attack. Club work offered you an opportunity for self-improvement.

"Shall I remind you of all the short-cuts and skills you've learned through club lessons and demonstrations in getting your work done? Through a kitchen clinic you found how many useless steps you made in a year's time, and that rearrangement of supplies and space made more time available to you for other interests. What about better methods of laundering, ironing, canning, and so on? I don't suppose you think all of those skills dropped right out of the clear, blue sky into your lap? I can't begin to recall for you all the things you learned to do with your hands at club meetings.

"Remember all the inspiration, fun, and pleasure that were yours, that will always be yours, derived from visits, tours, and trips sponsored by the club? Goodness! Didn't you really have a time for yourself in the Nation's capital way back in 1934 when you accompanied the very first official full-time home demonstration agent Pocahontas county had to the Country Life Conference? How proud you were when at the evening program it was Miss Sarah Huff from Jackson's Mill who directed a chorus of West Virginians in singing West Virginia anthems. And mind you, in the group delegates and representatives from practically every state in the Union. And the sight-seeing! You'll never forget that. You made the mistake of wearing your Sunday shoes and had to carry them in your hands a part of the time ... Ha, ha, ha! That really was a sight--you walking around the Smithsonian halls barefooted! You'll never forget that trip ... seeing the awe-inspiring memorials to Americans who helped to make this Nation great; walking through the great halls of the Capitol ... where the laws that govern a nation of free people are made or dissolved.

"And what about Jackson's Mill, West Virginia's great training center? The inspiration, knowledge, and of friendships made? Do these not count for something? So you have nothing to write about?"

(FIRST DREAM goes off stage; soft music continues, as if on radio.
Enter SECOND DREAM.)

SECOND DREAM -- "I'm another Memory of your club work. Can you not place your finger on something the club has done for the improvement of your family? I guess you've forgotten that years ago you believed that as long as your family members were not hungry that they were well fed? The value of proper nutrition learned at club meetings has been one of the important things that has come into the life of your family. You've had practically no illnesses in years. I won't say that proper food has been entirely responsible, but it most certainly has helped.

"And how about the family 'pocket book'? Haven't you been able to contribute 'a right smart' to it by learning how to control the bean beetle and other insects? Your club had demonstrations on all phases of gardening, canning, and storing food. You KNOW these things helped you to provide a better food supply at less cost.

"Last but not least, you learned to always be proud of your home. Years ago, you were just getting started; your children were little; you did not have the things you have now, or the things the older members in your club had. You were hesitant about having the club meet with you. But you learned that those things really do not matter. Your home--be it two rooms or ten--is the place where you live and it is the shining palace to all who dwell therein, and to those who enter its portals. It's the friendliness and hospitality that people really need and seek."

(SECOND DREAM goes off stage; soft music continues. THIRD DREAM enters.)

THIRD DREAM -- "So you can't think of anything to write about on the value of home demonstration work? Can it be that club work during the past 16 years has done nothing for the improvement of your community? What about the health improvement? For years, your club sponsored and helped with Well-Baby and Immunization Clinics. You've not had a case of fever in years, and it used to be so common. What about the other diseases that are being effectively controlled?

"And just think how your club helped through the years with conservation programs. By learning along with the men in your family about soil-saving practices, you not only enriched your farm and community, but your pocketbook as well.

"The hot lunch that you couldn't do without now--it was the club that first sponsored it. Everyone knows that it definitely has helped the health of the children.

"Do you remember how many sinks there were in the community when the club was organized 16 years ago? I believe there were only two. Club work stresses ways and means to make your work shorter and easier. And installing a sink in every home has been one of its slogans. How many sinks are there now? Well, I wouldn't be too far wrong if I estimated that there are not many more than TWO homes without them. I could go on and on ... but time is running out."

(THIRD DREAM goes off stage. FOURTH DREAM enters)

FOURTH DREAM -- "One of the most important phases of club work is the worship emphasis. You're not told HOW to worship or WHERE to worship ... but to worship the Creator of Heaven and Earth in spirit and in truth. Some of your most inspiring moments were at club vespers and devotionals. It matters not your faith, creed, or denomination ... just so you pray sincerely and live sincerely. In this wonderful land of ours, the Freedom of Worship is a great heritage.

"We--your dreams of Memories--have counted some of the blessings of club work for you ... and yet you can't think of anything to say to those who are not familiar with its values. Rise up! And say what you have to say, for Time is short even if you live to be old."

(FOURTH DREAM goes off stage. Door opens, daughter enters, looks at mother in chair, then yells:)

DAUGHTER--"MOTHER, wake up! I thought you were goint to write a skit on home demonstration work. Have you been asleep all this time?"

MOTHER (rubbing her eyes)--"I've been asleep--or have I? Or was it a vision that I saw? Well, anyway, vision or dream, I'll be able to write reams tomorrow."

DAUGHTER (yelling toward off-stage)--"DAD, mother is still asleep; better get her out of that chair or she'll be dreaming again!..."

(NOTE: The "Dreams" may be women draped in sheets; or just ordinarily dressed, but in either case they should wear a band across chest or head bearing inscription, "DREAM.")

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